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La Fiesta de Conmemoración

Prompt: Días de la Independencias | FRCA

It was strange, El Salvador mused, that so many countries could celebrate their independence on the same day. There were, of course, many jokes about how independence from Britain was the most celebrated in the world, but those countries did not all celebrate them on the same day, nor did they do so together.

That was what made El Salvador, his siblings, and his niece so different.

They all had the same Independence Day, because they used to be states of the same country.

El Salvador still missed his sister fiercely.

"Why are you sitting here and brooding? This is meant to be a party," El Salvador heard his brother say as Honduras walked over and threw an arm over El Salvador's shoulder.

"I know, I know. I'm just...thinking," El Salvador said. "It's hard to celebrate today without thinking about how Central America is gone."

"She wouldn't want you to be sad over her death like this," Honduras said. El Salvador scoffed.

"Is that why we created the Confederation of Central America? Or the Federation of Central America? Or our very own United States of Central America? Because I'm not the only one who missed her so badly," El Salvador said, knowing that he was far from the only one who mourned their sister and wished she could have lived.

But at least he had never fathered any of those replacements. He tried to love them; they were still family, but he never stopped

seeing the face of his sister reflected in them.

El Salvador had gone from being a country to a state to a country to a state.

Regardless of what name he was taking, the loss of his sister still burned bright.

"Okay, you're rejoining the party. I think you need to get your mind off things. Or at least talk about them more. You've never moped like this before," Honduras said. El Salvador laughed.

"Grief is weird," he responded. El Salvador didn't know why he got hit with it when he did, but...it just happened, and it hurt.

"It sure is," Honduras said, walking back over to the girls.

"Hey boys? Where did you run off to? Not a very good party if half of the guests ditch," Nicaragua said with a sharp smile. El Salvador managed a smile in return.

"I was just thinking about your mother. I wish she could be here. She would find it amazing that we're all still close," El Salvador said. Guatemala's smile turned sad.

"Yeah, she would have. I wish she could have lived long enough to know me as a woman and Honduras as a man," Guatemala said, giving their brother an affectionate look. Honduras let out a little laugh.

"You think she would have been accepting?" Honduras asked. Guatemala shrugged.

"Maybe not, but I'd rather be hated and known as who I am than loved and hiding myself," Guatemala said. El Salvador's smile turned sour. He didn't like dishonoring the memory of their sister with the thoughts that she was not as great as she seemed.

El Salvador knew she had problems; there wasn't a single country that didn't, but...that was the woman who raised him.

"I think she would have loved you," Costa Rica said, finally joining

the conversation. "It was just us five for a long time, and you know how deeply she cared about family. About us. I don't know if she would have understood, but I think she would have tried to love you anyway."

"Thanks, Rica," Guatemala said, giving their sister a grateful smile, before Nicaragua let out a small laugh.

"Wow, the mood kinda dropped, didn't it?" she said. El Salvador shifted uncomfortably.

"I'm sorry," he said, but Nicaragua waved him off.

"No need. This was her Independence Day as well. She doesn't deserve to be forgotten," Nicaragua said with a small smile. "I miss my mother too."

"If she were alive when the United States started fucking with other governments and people, she probably would have decked him in public," Honduras said, a fond, reminiscent smile on his face. Costa Rica snorted.

"She would have, and it would have been great," she said, "But there's nothing stopping us from doing that."

"Yeah, aside from international politics and all of us not wanting to piss him off and give him an excuse to try and invade our countries or overthrow our governments again," El Salvador pointed out.

"If we did it in private, he probably wouldn't care," Guatemala said, and El Salvador groaned as he realized this was no longer a joke and his family was actually thinking about doing it.

"Yeah, but we can't use a political meeting to get him alone in private; that would also be in poor taste," Honduras said.

"Guys, how about we celebrate our independence and worry about the technicalities of polity hitting someone for his war crimes against us later," El Salvador said, his voice fond and exasperated.

"You're no fun, Salvadorito," Nicaragua said.

"I'm *older* than you!"

"Fine, Dorito. We won't do anything today. I make no promises about tomorrow," Costa Rica said, her eyes shining bright with mischief under her glasses.

El Salvador smiled, feeling some of the hurt and grief in his heart fade away.

He loved his family.

He was so lucky to be close to them.

It was something few countries could say. But a shared history and Independence Day had a way of bringing people together in ways nothing else could.

Hermanos Mexicanos

Prompt: Cuentística | México

"And that's why I'm Tejas' favorite Mexican state," Aguascalientes finished, a hand on her heart and a smile on her face.

"That's such bullshit, I'm clearly his favorite. We have so much in common," Nuevo León said, shoving his sister and causing her to fall off her seat.

"Pendejo," Aguascalientes muttered, "I'll get you back for that. You're not safe from me."

"Why did I let myself get roped into this?" Puebla said with a sigh and a roll of their eyes.

"Because they bribed you with tamales?" San Luis Potosí said in a matter-of-fact tone, not even looking up from the stick of wood he was carving.

"And they were damn good tamales. I got all the abuelas in my neighborhood to help me," Campeche said, crossing her arms.

"Is there anyone in your neighborhood who doesn't know you're their state?" Nuevo León asked, raising an eyebrow. Campeche didn't answer, but her darkening cheeks were an answer enough. "Ay, hermana, you're going to get yourself in trouble."

"She just wants to spend time with people her age. That's not a bad thing," Quintana Roo said. Campeche threw her hands into the air.

"You're forty-three!"

"And you're 155. You're old as hell." Quintana Roo said, exchanging a high five with Baja California Sur.

"Ay, los bebitos are unionizing," San Luis Potosí said in a tired

voice.

"We are very off topic. Does anyone have any other stories they would like to share?" Yucatán said in a futile effort to corral his siblings.

"I kicked France's puppet state in the balls," Puebla said, causing Yucatán to reel back.

"When?" he asked, incredulous as the other states there burst into laughter.

"Back in like...'65 I think? I don't remember when, but I just know I was frustrated and he was in the area. Like, I know he had no free will, and it was rude to take out my anger at France on him, but also, he had no free will and was an extension of France," Puebla explained.

"Puebla wins best story. I don't think we can beat that," Baja California Sur said.

"I can't believe she's been sitting on that for over a hundred years, and it's never been brought up before!" Aguascalientes exclaimed. Puebla gave a mischievous smile.

"You don't know everything about me," she said.

"Well, that's ominous. Does that mean you've kicked Tejas in the balls?" Nuevo León asked. Puebla just shrugged, and he groaned. "My perspective on you has been shaken."

"Good. I'd hate to be boring."

"You're the immortal personification of a Mexican state, you literally can't be anything other than interesting." Nuevo León said.

"You're proof that we can be boring."

"EXCUSE ME?"

Un País Independiente

Prompt: Fiesta/Siesta

Equatorial Guinea wouldn't give up being a country for anything, but man, was it *exhausting* sometimes.

Having to go to political events and deal with people wanting to win her favor or parade her around like a trophy was tiring. She was used to it, of course, as she was paraded around by her father when she was a colony, especially after the colonies in the Americas got their independence and she was left as one of the only colonies of the once great Spanish Empire, but...she wished that independence could have meant the end of that.

Equatorial Guinea was drained socially, not wanting to interact with any more people, and drained mentally from dealing with being paraded.

Being a country was the most exhausting reward she could have been given.

But she was glad she finally had her independence. She had hated her last few years under the empire, suffocating under the weight of Franco's ideals.

Equatorial Guinea was a woman, and she was African. She had been watched and dressed according to his ideas. She had been a trophy, not even a countryperson.

At least now, even as she was paraded around, she was treated like a country, treated with respect.

Equatorial Guinea wasn't a thing here. She was a country. Their country.

Equatorial Guinea flopped down onto her bed, letting out a relieved

sigh as she relaxed onto it.

There was nothing better than relaxing on her bed after a long day.

Equatorial Guinea closed her eyes and let herself drift off to sleep.

¡Baile, Hijo!

Prompt: Bailamos! | Chile

Chile loved his children dearly. He loved them all more than words could describe and loved being there to help them. However, as a father of four daughters and one son, he could not deny that he had a special relationship with Juan Fernández Islands.

How could he not? That was his boy, his son, not to mention his oldest living child.

There was a deep understanding in their relationship.

Which is why Chile tried to take some time out of his week to spend a day with his son.

He had asked Pascua Island to take Chilean Antarctic Territory out for the day, which she had done with a smile that admittedly made Chile nervous.

He was sure they were going to be fine, but his daughters were a rambunctious lot, especially as society's ever-changing customs allowed them to do more than they had been allowed in the past.

So Chile sent his daughters off and decided that today was the day he was going to teach Juan Fernández la cueca.

It was his national dance (even if it had been that bastard Pinochet who declared it as such. Chile tried to move past that and focus on how much he enjoyed the dance and not on the memories of that man), and it was a shame that his son didn't know it.

"Papa, I don't need to learn la cueca. I am a fisherman and I don't interact with people much," Juan Fernández complained, and Chile smiled.

"You talk to me all the time about how close-knit your islands are.

And isn't tourism a big industry there?" Chile asked. Juan Fernández scoffed.

"I don't want to get dressed up all fancy and dance because some hijoeputa asked me to," Juan Fernández said, crossing his arms. Chile frowned.

"Do they really annoy you that much? Is there anything I can do to help?" Chile asked, not wanting his son to feel like a dancing monkey.

"It's alright, Papa. Humans will always be weird about us. I think us more tourist spots are just treated as part of the sights and sounds they are there to see, then as our own people," Juan Fernández said, before tugging on Chile's arms. "Don't worry. If it makes you happy, I will try to learn. But I have two left feet."

Chile knew he was going to worry for a while over his boy and would maybe have to pay a visit to see that his boy was being treated right, but he chose to put that aside for now.

This was his time to enjoy with his son.

No politics, no sisters, just Juan Fernández and Chile.

Chile valued this time like nothing else.

He was so lucky to be a father.

La Moda y La Identidad

Prompt: La Moda

Colombia really should have cleaned out his closet and dressers at least twenty years earlier. He hadn't realized how many clothes he owned until he was confronted with at least sixty years of fashion shoved into various places in his home.

"Why does fashion have to change so quickly?" Colombia groaned in annoyance. He wouldn't have this problem if a clothing style lasted more than ten years.

But no, things had to change day after day, and when you lived as long as he did...it built up.

Maybe a museum or two would be willing to take some of the older stuff off his hands. Colombia didn't like the idea of throwing the clothes away, letting all that fabric go to waste, but at the same time, some of the material was not in use anymore, so it wasn't like Colombia could turn a nineteenth-century jacket into a T-shirt.

There was also a profound sense of sadness as he looked at some of the clothing, as they brought up memories of things that had happened so many years ago.

There was that shirt he had worn when Panama got her independence.

That pair of pants he stopped wearing because he ripped a hole in them while hiking.

So many memories were contained in things he no longer has a use for.

Colombia closed his eyes and sighed.

This was going to be quite a mess to clean up.

But at the same time...he was glad that things were changing. It was nice to have clothes that felt more like his, and not a style he inherited from his ancestors, the ones that hurt his people, the ones that tried to kill him when he was ready for his independence.

Things changed.

That was for the best.

La Guerra del Fútbol

Prompt: Deportes

When General Oswaldo López Arellano seized control of Honduras after a violent coup, El Salvador prepared himself for whatever was next to come. While he had no way of knowing whether the United States was involved in it, the general was hostile to communists, so El Salvador would bet on United States' involvement.

It had made him nervous, and with so many changes that were bound to come from something like that, he prepared to talk to his sister less, and for possible tensions to arise.

That was the thing about coups. You never knew what they brought.

Especially with so many of his people living in Honduras. The last time he checked, his people, illegally immigrating because El Salvador did not have the land to support so many farmers, made up a decent chunk of the Honduran population now.

But that wasn't the end of that story, as much of Honduras' land was owned by United States' companies, and El Salvador knew what that meant.

Knew that it meant the United States and his people would do whatever they could to keep power in Honduras, including pressuring and bribing the new dictator into doing what benefited them.

That was perhaps why the new land reform bill had been allowed to come into effect, even though it had been passed a year before General López Arellano had seized power.

And thus, El Salvador's people became the scapegoats for any problems that came out of General López Arellano's rule. They had

their lands in Honduras seized and were expelled from the country en masse, leaving El Salvador with a refugee crisis on his hands.

El Salvador knew this could only end badly, as his government was not happy about taking in so many people and having nothing they could do to help them.

He only hoped that he was able to preserve his relationship with his sister.

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June 8, 1969

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Honduras let out a deep breath as he searched for his brother in the crowd. Even with the growing tensions between their countries and the football rivalry that they had, he was hoping that he could soothe some hurt feelings while El Salvador was in town.

If not for him, but for El Salvador's people who lived in Honduras' land. The sentiment against them had only grown, and that had been made all the more clear by the Honduran fans who had been harassing the Salvadoran team all last night at their hotel.

Honduras only hoped that it really was the football rivalry that was causing that harassment. If not...well, there were two more matches, and plenty of time for things to get worse.

Football was supposed to be fun.

Why did it now feel like an omen?

Perhaps it was the fact that only one of them could win and move on to the FIFA World Cup. With the rising tensions... either one of them losing could go very badly indeed.

It was a shame one of them had to lose.

Then, Honduras caught sight of his brother, and he grinned, walking over to him.

"Hello, Salvadorito. How are you?" Honduras said, bracing himself for one of El Salvador's loving greetings, ones that always made Honduras more aware than he wanted to be that everyone close to him would always see him as a woman.

But El Salvador just gave a small smile.

"Hello, Honduras. Your fans are...excitable today," El Salvador said, and Honduras immediately knew that his brother was trying to be more diplomatic than he felt.

"I'm sorry," Honduras said, hoping his brother would sense that Honduras was also trying to apologize for other things, things that he was expected to support, "I don't want them to do this to you. We're family. That should mean more to our people."

El Salvador hummed, his eyes becoming distant.

"Perhaps it has been too long since we were really family, in the way they expect. Our people and our nation have to come first now, even if we wish it didn't," El Salvador said, and coming from him...it hurt more than Honduras expected.

El Salvador cared more about family than anyone else in their family. If he was starting to see things as a lost cause...had Honduras failed him in more than one way, when he failed to protect El Salvador's people?

They had long since started to become some of Honduras' people, marrying them and making up 10% of his population.

It was his role to protect and help his people, but...the illegal Salvadoran immigrants were hurting his people.

They were the problem, even if some were adapting.

Honduras couldn't defend them at the cost of everyone else.

"You are my brother and I love you," Honduras said, though the words felt empty.

"I know you do. I just wish you could see how things have changed

for you," El Salvador said. Honduras shifted uncomfortably.

"What do you mean by that?" Honduras asked.

"Don't let the government decide what you believe and who the real opponent is. Maybe my people have come here illegally, but I'm not the country that indirectly controls so much of your land. You know just as well as I that we do not have the best history with that man," El Salvador said. Honduras gritted his teeth.

"This is about United States," Honduras said. El Salvador looked away.

"Maybe not, but I would be aware of who exactly your leader is in the pocket of," El Salvador said, before shaking his head and holding out his arm.

"Come on, little sister. Let's not talk about politics now and instead watch a football game. This is a time to have fun," El Salvador said.

Honduras wanted to continue the conversation, but he knew his brother was not going to be eager to do so.

Honduras took his arm and hoped that harassing the Salvadoran football team would be as far as anyone would go.

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June 15, 1969

San Salvador, El Salvador

Tensions were rising. It was getting worse.

It had just been a football game, one that Honduras had barely won, and yet it had inflamed people enough that they would riot outside the hotel of the Honduran team.

It was bad enough that people had died.

That was what scared El Salvador more than anything. He was angry too, so upset with his sister for sitting by and letting her

government disrespect El Salvador's people, *ethnically cleanse* them from the land that some of them had lived and worked on for decades.

They had been helping Honduras, especially since her fancy new leader seemed content to let the American companies rip her off and tank her economy.

But no, El Salvador and his people were the problem.

And now their people rioted.

But that wasn't the biggest insult, no, for riots could just be passed off as extremists that did not reflect El Salvador or his beliefs.

No, the biggest insult was what happened at that second football game, when the flags were raised.

Only, instead of a Honduran flag, a dirty rag was raised.

"El Salvador?" Honduras asked from beside him, her voice angry, losing the cheerful tone, the loving nickname she always called him.

"I knew nothing of this!" El Salvador immediately protested, but he could see that the damage was done. "I swear."

"You complain about my people harassing your team at their hotel, and yet you do this to me? I can forgive the rioting. I know that gets out of hand, and violence hurts you, but this?" Honduras said, throwing her hand out to the flag, "That is an insult that I cannot forgive, because it means that it's far more than angry people involved in this. Your government is no better than mine, it seems."

"Honduras, I'm sorry. I would have stopped this if I knew," El Salvador said, biting his tongue about how her people had done far more than harass his football team, something that the hundreds of refugees arriving at their border told him.

"These games are not fun anymore," Honduras said. El Salvador shook his head.

"No, they aren't," El Salvador said, before biting his tongue and sitting back down.

He wanted to leave, but he had to stay here. This was his capital, and if anyone should support his team, it was him.

But the tension between him and Honduras never faded.

Even the victory of his team did nothing to soothe the ugly feeling in El Salvador's stomach.

Did his sister hate him now?

And as word of Anti-Salvadorian riots began to come in, El Salvador had to face the possibility that the answer to that question was "yes."

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June 26, 1969

Mexico City, Mexico

"Oh, mija, how have you been?" Mexico called as Honduras arrived in her home where he would be staying for a few days. The final match between him and El Salvador was taking place in Mexico City, and Honduras had decided to come, even if El Salvador wouldn't.

He was not going to be like his brother.

He was not going to throw a fit over things and refuse to come to a game.

Even if the football games were doing more harm than good.

"I'm fine, Mexico," Honduras said, knowing that even if Mexico was his biological mother, it still felt so weird to call her that when they were both independent countries.

"Are you and your brother still fighting?" Mexico asked. Honduras snorted.

"He's not here, is he?" Honduras said, before walking to the guest room, "Is Ciudad here?"

"She's out with friends," Mexico said. Honduras raised an eyebrow.

"You let her go out all by herself?" He asked, knowing that seemed very out of character for Mexico, who kept her children close, guarding them as if they were gold.

"I figured you would want some alone time. Things have been hard for you, haven't they?" Mexico asked, her voice not accusatory or prying, just...kind. Honduras paused in his tracks.

"I'm not trying to hurt Salvador. He's decided that I am, but I'm not. I'm just..." Honduras trailed off, not having any more words to describe things.

He knew that dictatorship could change a countryhuman, but...had he really changed that much? Honduras didn't think so, as the control wasn't strong enough for him to be forced to think of himself as a woman, but...maybe to the outside world, something was different, and that was enough to make even a man as kind-hearted as El Salvador angry.

"I'm sure you two can work through this," Mexico said, "It's a family dispute."

"That could be said about the war we fought against you," Honduras said, shaking his head. "Family is complicated during the best of times, and right now...this is the worst my relationship with El Salvador has ever been. He hasn't spoken to me since the last game."

"Things will get better someday. I know you two care about each other too much to fight over this forever," Mexico said. Honduras smiled thinly.

"I hope you're right about that," he said. He ignored that a much larger part of him thought she was wrong. Honduras then walked into the guest room, sitting down on the bed and rubbing at his head.

What was he supposed to do? He was not in the wrong for wanting to protect the interests of his own people. If El Salvador had a problem with his people, that was his problem to solve, not Honduras'.

Honduras was not at fault.

He wasn't.

Honduras didn't spend long moping, wanting to get to the game as quickly as possible, and not wanting to give Mexico any more reason to interrogate him.

So Honduras put the conflict from his mind and tried to do his best to enjoy the game, even if Mexico's police force had to be there to stop any conflicts.

Even as he heard the Salvadorans chanting in the standings, calling out "murderers, murderers," and the ones who saw Honduras yelling those insults right at him.

"Maybe you're right," Mexico had said as she used her wings to hide Honduras from angry Salvadorans, "Maybe this isn't something that's going to be fixed anytime soon."

Honduras didn't know what to say. He had grown used to the resentment and anger, but it had, for the most part, been contained in his and El Salvador's countries. Mexico was the first outside to see how the anger had boiled into hatred.

If only they hadn't been made to play against each other.

Maybe that would have prevented the tensions from exploding.

El Salvador won the game.

Honduras didn't know if that would improve things or worsen them.

But he elected to be the bigger person and prepared himself for a name when he got back to Mexico's house.

He wasn't ready to head home yet, and he certainly didn't feel like

partying.

When he got back to Mexico's house, he sat down in a chair, feeling the weight of everything pressing down on him.

"Are you okay?" Mexico asked. Honduras nodded.

"I just need a minute," Honduras said, before exhaling loudly, as if that would help remove the stress he was feeling.

"I'm sorry," Mexico said. Honduras shrugged.

"Maybe this will help with El Salvador's anger against me," Honduras said, although he didn't feel too confident. Mexico let out a small laugh before walking over to the TV and turning it on.

Honduras tuned it out until he heard Mexico's gasp, turning to the screen.

"And in this bit of breaking news, El Salvador has broken diplomatic ties with Honduras after weeks of growing tensions," the news anchor said, and Honduras' mouth dropped.

"He won! What is he doing?" Honduras exclaimed, unable to wrap his head around what he was seeing.

"A statement from the government of El Salvador reads 'the Government of Honduras has not taken any effective measures to punish these crimes, which constitute genocide, nor has it given assurances of indemnification or reparations for the damages caused to Salvadorans,'" the news anchor continued, and Honduras felt his blood boil.

How dare that bastard accuse him of genocide! As if he were innocent, his government person, as if he weren't the one who replaced Honduras' flag with a dirty rag.

Even as they fought, Honduras still treated him with respect.

Honduras stood up and moved to pack his things together.

He needed to get back home now.

Things were only getting worse, and diplomacy was no longer an option.

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July 3, 1969

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

When Honduras heard the news, he only grew angrier at his brother. It was hard not to be angry at El Salvador, with the baseless accusations of genocide, when all Honduras was doing was dealing with illegal immigration and returning lands to Honduran farmers to help his economy.

El Salvador wanted a reason to be a victim, and it was so frustrating for Honduras to deal with that, especially when El Salvador did things like this.

El Salvador had not only fired on a civilian aircraft, but also fired on a civilian aircraft that was in *Honduras'* airspace.

El Salvador could have *murdered* civilians while they weren't even at war, and he wanted to act like he was so damn superior.

"Salvador, what are you doing?" Honduras groaned, his face in his hands. El Salvador wanted to act as if his government was perfect, that Honduras was the only one with governmental problems.

Honduras wasn't sure if the elite ruling in El Salvador's country had made him not think about the flaws in El Salvador's government, the issues they would never address, or if El Salvador, like he did to so many things he didn't want to see the flaws of, ignored all the warning signs and evidence of his government's mistakes.

If El Salvador had fixed his own problems, then his people wouldn't have needed to flee to Honduras, and Honduras wouldn't have needed to send them back to him.

Honduras was going to need to bring Organization of American States into this, wouldn't he? They were teetering on the edge of all-out war, and with El Salvador refusing to speak to Honduras,

something had to be done if they were going to prevent things from exploding.

Cutting off diplomatic relations was one thing. It was another to attack civilians.

"Ms. Honduras, ma'am, I have another message for you," the messenger who had delivered the news of El Salvador's attack said. Honduras felt his heart sink.

"What is it?"

"We intercepted a Salvadoran plane doing reconnaissance. We weren't able to capture it, but we drove it off," the messenger said. Honduras nodded and waved the messenger away.

He definitely needed to talk to the Organization of American States.

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July 4, 1969

Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

Organization of American States had been expecting an emergency meeting for a while now, as the tensions between El Salvador and Honduras only deteriorated further.

But it was the actions of yesterday that finally led to the meeting, when a border skirmish occurred, despite the fact that a state of war did not exist between the two.

Yet. That was what they were here to prevent.

Organization of American States rolled her shoulders before disappearing into the Land In Between. While they preferred to use the real world for meetings between countries, emergency meetings like this made it hard to get all of the coutryhumans into one place, thus leading to meetings in the Land In Between, in a building United Nations had had built for this reason.

When Organization of American States arrived, she saw Honduras

pacing in front of the building, worry clear on her face.

"Honduras, how are you?" Organization of American States called, approaching her. Honduras gave a strained smile.

"I could be better. I don't like the way things are going. I don't understand why El Salvador has done this to me," Honduras said. Organization of American States thought they could both be considered aggressors, but she didn't say that; she just smiled and nodded, knowing that it was her job to keep the peace.

"Well, let's hope that we can come to a permanent solution." Organization of American States said, before walking inside.

The other countries had gathered in the meeting room, and although it had been a few years since Cuba was voted out, Organization of American States still felt the effect of him not being there with them, finding it strange.

He was one of her founding members after all.

"Welcome, everyone," Organization of American States began in English. **"Is everyone alright with this meeting happening in Spanish?"**

There was a murmuring of understanding and agreement from everyone except United States, who was staring ahead, brows furrowing in what looked like confusion.

"United States?" Organization of American States asked, worried, **"Are you alright?"**

United States blinked, seemingly coming out of his trance and nodding, "Spanish is fine."

Organization of American States frowned, United States' Spanish sounding more awkward, more accented, but she put it out of her mind.

She was just stressed. That was why it appeared that way.

"Well, I'm sure you all know why we are here. This meeting is being

held at the request of the Honduran foreign minister," Organization of American States said, nodding at Honduras, and paying close attention to how El Salvador shifted, and then scowled.

"Yes, the growing dispute between Honduras and El Salvador," Peru said.

"My government isn't eager to get involved if it can be worked out between the two," Bolivia added, a sentiment many seemed to agree with.

"Is that a request that you do not want my organization to take an action yet, and would rather they reestablish diplomatic ties and try to work it out themselves?" Organization of American States asked, to the nodding of others.

Honduras began to look angry, but Organization of American States quickly began to speak again before an outburst could occur.

"However, I believe that we should not leave it here. Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, you are all close to Honduras and El Salvador, being their family. Would you be willing to help mediate the situation?" Organization of American States asked, knowing that picking their family might make both nations more willing to listen.

"I would be willing," Guatemala said, his wings drawing close around him. Nicaragua and Costa Rica nodded in agreement.

"Thank you. And Honduras, El Salvador, I'm sure I do not need to say this, but please avoid any action that might further endanger the situation. We do not need a war, and I hope that neither of you wants one," Organization of American States said.

"We don't," El Salvador said, before standing up, "Are we finished?"

Organization of American States nodded, and El Salvador disappeared.

Organization of American States had a feeling that war was going to happen despite her efforts.

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July 14, 1969

Honduran-El Salvador Border, Pan-American Highway

As El Salvador marched into his sister's country, he knew his Air Force was already hard at work attacking Honduran airfields and ensuring his sister's beloved planes would never make it off the ground.

He knew they were focused on Toncontín International Airport, where Honduras kept most of her Air Force, and El Salvador prayed that there wouldn't be any civilian casualties from the attack.

Enough blood was going to be shed.

That was why El Salvador chose to join the troops that it did. His invasion was Honduras was in two branches, one moving into the Sula Valley to take it, while another, his branch, moved up the Pan-American Highway to Tegucigalpa.

Honduras was never much of a fighter, but she preferred the Air Force to anything else, and if she was in the Air Force, she was in Tegucigalpa.

Besides, it was better that El Salvador get to her before anyone else did. His soldiers were angry with her, and...El Salvador knew what angry male soldiers did to women.

El Salvador might be at war with her, but Honduras was still his sister. She has suffered many injustices in the past few years. El Salvador would not let her suffer this one.

He wouldn't ever forgive himself for this one.

He couldn't believe that it had turned to this. The skirmishes had been one thing, with the crossings of the borders and the injuries from them, but...this was war.

El Salvador was marching into his sister country with tanks and modified armored vehicles, marching through her land and taking so much land so quickly.

El Salvador had always been a family man and hated going to war against his family.

But...he had to.

He had to.

El Salvador just hoped this would be quick.

Judging how quickly they were advancing toward the capital, it would be.

El Salvador closed his eyes for a brief moment.

I'm sorry, Honduras.

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July 15, 1969

Sky Above El Salvador

Honduras was angry.

He was more than angry; he was furious.

Almost 40 kilometers. That was how far El Salvador had marched into his country, after trying to wipe out Honduras' Air Force, clearly targeting his capital city.

It had made him so angry.

El Salvador always liked to pretend he was the peaceful one in the family and that he hated war.

Honduras knew better.

Now, he would always know better.

This was nothing more than a land grab by El Salvador, hidden under the guise of being a mission to save the poor Salvadorans that El Salvador had convinced himself Honduras was committing genocide against.

Honduras was glad that his gender had made him competent at passing as a man when he needed to, because he would never be able to do so full-time. He would have found some way to be involved in the war.

But Honduras' love for places would always have him in the sky.

Besides, if El Salvador wanted to bomb his international airport, that was fine.

Honduras could do the same.

He had specifically volunteered to bomb the airport, while other members of his air force were targeting oil facilities in El Salvador, trying to find whatever way they could to weaken El Salvador's invading forces.

The Honduran army was not ready to repel the invaders yet.

Honduras pulled his mind from what was happening on the ground and moved it back to the mission.

Flying was freedom.

If only this weren't a mission of destruction.

Honduras released his ordinance over the airport before turning back home, knowing that the El Salvadoran air force was on its way, and if he didn't want to risk getting captured, he needed to get out before he was shot down.

Honduras gripped the joystick of his World War II-era plane and prayed to God for the strength to see this war through.

He prayed to God for victory.

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July 16, 1969

Pan-American Highway, Honduras

El Salvador was not experienced in war, but even he knew that he shouldn't have expected their advance to continue without delay forever. He knew that something was going to bring them to a stop.

It was just an unfortunate combination of things.

A lack of ammunition and increased Honduran resistance.

El Salvador knew that if the situation stayed this way for much longer, it could be very bad indeed.

He hoped that the fortunes would change, and at the very least, he would be able to continue his march to the capital. Taking that would ensure he got something out of this war, and if they were lucky, put an end to the fighting.

Until then, El Salvador was using the time to take a break and ignore the part of him that felt guilty over the war.

Honduras had only brought this on herself. She had made this her people's fate.

"El Salvador, we have news from the other front!" a man called, walking up to El Salvador. He perked up, turning to face the messenger.

"What is it? Have they managed to start moving again?" El Salvador asked. The man shook his head, and El Salvador scowled.

"But, sir, they were able to capture the town of Nueva Ocotepeque after fighting with the Honduran army there, and successfully drove them off," the man said. El Salvador's scowl faded.

"That is good news. Thank you for bringing this to me," El Salvador said, before dismissing the man.

It would do little to stop the stalled army here, but it was something.

And every victory was a good thing.

El Salvador certainly did not need a long war, especially since the

OEA and UN were certainly breathing down the necks of his politicians to end things.

They didn't understand what the situation had become or what El Salvador was trying to prevent.

Still, it was nice to have people who actually cared about peace.

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July 17, 1969

Sky over Honduras

1969 was a strange date for a dogfight between World War II planes, but here Honduras was, in the cockpit of his trusty Corsair and trying not to get shot down by the Salvadoran planes buzzing around him.

The aerial fight had not been going well, as after Honduras' initial victories in his bombings of El Salvador, he had been forced on the defensive, trying to keep the Salvadoran Air Force from destroying any more of his planes.

That was his advantage, and he would not lose it.

Honduras had the better planes, and his brother knew it. That was why he was trying so hard to target them.

Honduras was lucky. His brother had been stalled, and the Organization of American States was still fighting hard for a ceasefire.

Honduras was certainly willing for one to happen, but his brother was certainly doing his best to hold out.

If this war had taught Honduras anything, it was that his brother was a good liar. He had tried Honduras, had tried their family, and maybe even tricked himself, but it was clear he was just another warmonger.

Honduras wished it didn't hurt as much as it did.

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July 18, 1969

Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

Costa Rica's siblings were idiots. War, and for what? It was so short-lived, so stupid, and would certainly harm their countries far more than it would ever help them.

"Good news," Ecuador said, reading from a news bulletin they had been sent, "El Salvador's finally accepted the ceasefire."

Costa Rica, her brother Guatemala, her niece Nicaragua, alongside Ecuador, Argentina, Dominican Republic, and United States had been nominated for a committee to handle the situation between El Salvador and Honduras. They had quickly taken over handling negotiations between the two countries, and had been pressing for the four days of war for them to begin a ceasefire.

El Salvador had been the sticking point, but it seemed even he had lost his taste for this war.

"Are the terms the same?" United States asked, his back strengthening, and his Spanish losing the American accent it had held before.

"Yes. He's agreed to withdraw within 96 hours and end all inflammatory press, radio, and TV campaigns," Ecuador said, before collapsing into his chair, his wings stretching out. "He's hoping OEA lets us leave now."

"She's not holding us hostage," Argentina said, though he seemed just as ready to leave as Ecuador did.

"We should probably stay until we are sure that El Salvador will actually do what he says. War makes great liars," Dominican Republic pointed out. Nicaragua nodded.

"Yeah, I know my uncle. He means well, but if he really had bought into the accusation of genocide, he's not going to leave," Nicaragua said. Costa Rica nodded.

"She's right. El Salvador is stubborn and cares deeply for his people. If he thinks leaving Honduras might put them in more danger than staying will, he might stay," Costa Rica said. United States hummed thoughtfully.

"Do you think he might violate the ceasefire?" he asked. Guatemala shook his head.

"Definitely not. He hates violence; he's probably glad a peaceful solution has come around," Guatemala said.

"Then I say we acknowledge Salvador's acceptance of the ceasefire, make it clear it'll come into effect at midnight, then go out for lunch," Ecuador said. "We can continue to monitor things after that."

"Sounds good to me," United States said, standing up, "I'll pay. Would any of you mind if my daughter joined us?"

Costa Rica smiled as everyone filed out of the room.

It was nice to see that this mess was coming to an end.

She hated seeing her siblings fight like this. It had been tearing their little family apart at the seams, and she didn't want to see it tear any more.

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July 22, 1969

Washington, District of Columbia, United States of America

Organization of American States was pulled from her work by a knock on the door.

"Yes?" she called, knowing it was probably one of the seven countries that had been staying in DC while the conflict between El Salvador and Honduras was being resolved.

Thankfully, it was coming to a close...even if El Salvador still had yet to withdraw his troops.

"Hello, OEA," Argentina said, sticking his head into the room. "I have some news."

"If it's not 'El Salvador has withdrawn his troops and this war is basically over,' I don't want to hear it," Organization of American States deadpanned, knowing in her bones that this had to be more bad news.

El Salvador had resisted the ceasefire for so long. It was foolish to think that he would keep it.

Argentina's sheepish frown told her everything she needed to know.

"Has he broken the ceasefire?" Organization of American States asked. Argentina shook his head, stepping into the room.

"We received a message from him tonight. El Salvador has returned to his country, but he won't withdraw his troops until there is a guarantee of safety for Salvadorans still living in Honduras, until reparations are paid, and the anti-Salvadoran rioters are punished," Argentina reported. Organization of American States pinched the bridge of her nose.

"Does he want us to guarantee these things, or does he want Honduras to promise them?" she asked.

"Honduras, clearly. He's trying to punish her since he wasn't able to get whatever he wanted out of this war. He can't get more land, but he can make Honduras pay for her role in things," Argentina theorized. Organization of American States rubbed her forehead.

"We couldn't have worked this out after the withdrawal?" she asked, even though she already knew what the reason was.

"I guess he wants insurance," Argentina said, before frowning. "Have you gotten rest recently?"

"Please don't parent me," Organization of American States said. Argentina shook his head.

"I'm not trying too. But what's the point in putting me and the others in charge of this if you can't trust us to take care of things?

We have this handled. You get some rest so you can approach this with fresh eyes," Argentina said. Organization of American States sighed and relented.

"Fine. But one of you better come and get me if the situation changes at all," she ordered. Argentina gave her a small smile.

"Don't worry, we will."

And with those words, Organization of American States put the situation in the hands of her member states and hoped everything would be okay.

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August 2, 1969

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Finally, after so many days and far too many attempts at blackmail, El Salvador was finally leaving his country.

It had taken Organization of American States threatening to sanction El Salvador to get him to leave, and Honduras was sure that was just because he didn't want to end up like Cuba.

But he was leaving, things were over, and Honduras didn't have to pay reparations or whatever else El Salvador's crazy demands wanted from him.

Honduras had only done one thing, and that was to ensure that the Salvadorans who lived in his land would be protected, and that was only because he was not going to let this situation repeat itself.

And because Honduras was not the monster his brother thought he was.

Honduras didn't know where things were going from here, but he knew that things would never be the same again.

Whatever relationship they had had before the war had been destroyed in it.

All they could do now was move forward.

Honduras wondered what that would mean.

Los Ojos de La Madre

Prompt: Ojos

Mexico knew her eyes had not come from her father or grandfather. That much had been made clear when she looked at portraits of her father and grandfather, when she met the Spanish Empire, her great-grandfather, and saw eyes that were not her own.

She had always wondered where her eyes had come from.

It wasn't until she met Mexica, her namesake, and Nahua that she finally learned where her eyes had come from.

"Oh," Mexica had said in her own language, "You have Ēxcān Tlahtōlōyān's eyes."

Mexico's eyes were like Nahua's, like Mexica's, like Tlaxcalteca's eyes, but according to them, her eyes were nearly identical to those of the Aztec Empire.

Mexico hadn't been sure how to feel about that when she was younger, when she was still full of hate for the people that made her up, living on the ideas from her grandfather, ideas she was still working through.

But it had been her children who helped her see things in a new light.

Her...when her children were little, they had all had Mexico's eyes. Mexico had learned to love her eyes, seeing them in beautiful people she loved like nothing else.

Then they were gone, and Mexico couldn't look herself in the eyes, only seeing the ghosts of her children in them.

Then God had shown mercy, and her children were returned to her, different, but here, alive, and Mexico hadn't cared about those

differences, because she was lucky enough to have them again.

But the biggest difference, the one she noticed first, outside of the gender and the personalities, was their eyes.

So many of them had her father's eyes, not Mexico's.

It had hurt. It had felt like punishment.

She had failed her children, so the world was taking away the bit of Mexico that had always been in them.

It had always seemed to be in her greatest failures that she saw her father's eyes.

Texas had them, and they burned the way her father's had in portraits.

Sinaloa had her father's eyes. So did Yucatán and Tabasco.

Still, some of her children had her eyes.

So many did.

It made Mexico happy to still see that some of her family had her eyes.

Perhaps that was the most surprising thing about seeing California in person for the first time. They had been an American almost their entire life, yet those were Mexico's eyes.

And now...Mexico loved her eyes, her family's eyes.

They were something that connected them all, far more permanent than anything else.

El Hijo

Prompt: Espiritualidad

New Spain kneeled in the Cathedral, praying, asking for forgiveness and strength. He was trying his best to tame this godless land, trying his best to overcome the savage blood that ran through his veins and compelled him to do unspeakable sins.

New Spain begged God to forgive him for his savage roots, as he did every Sunday after Mass, swearing his life and his purpose to serve the merciful God and cleanse the world in his image.

New Spain was a good country, a good angel, and he would not let the demonic forces in his bloodline win.

New Spain was a good son, would obey his father and do as he, the most Holy Angel present on Earth, commanded.

New Spain was made to obey because he could not think on his own with such demonic forces plaguing him and his children.

His father could not be wrong; his father was...so brilliant and amazing that New Spain felt honored to be able to serve him and his empire and was honored to be a part of it.

His father had done so much good for the world, eradicating the Jews and Muslims in his homeland before moving to this new, savage world, bringing them the gift of Catholicism and angels to serve them, not the corrupted angels they claimed as countryhumans.

But his father was merciful, just like the Almighty God, and gave the corrupted angels a chance to change, to turn away from sin and be born anew. They could never become pure angels as they might have been long ago, but they could dedicate themselves to God.

Some took that opportunity, a sign of his father's greatness, to make

the corrupted angels, borderline demons, become servants of God again, even while others continued to fight for sin.

New Spain would do his best to purge those from this land permanently. They would burn, and this land would be free.

Sin had been allowed to run unchecked in this land for far too long, as Satan took advantage of this land's isolation to corrupt the angels in ways that the angels of Africa and Asia had not been corrupted.

New Spain would bring prosperity and happiness back to this land.

It was what he had been born to do.

La Historia de Arte

Prompt: Arte

Spain often felt a strange mix of guilt and pride whenever he looked at any of the works by Pablo Picasso.

Guilt over the fact that the dictatorship that Spain had once supported had driven his most well-known painters into exile, and pride that he was able to have some of these paintings in his country again.

Picasso had made it clear that some of his works, such as *Guernica,* were not allowed into Spain again until he had a democracy, until *he* understood what freedom and democracy really were, not what he had been trained to think.

"It's not your fault you were born into that dictatorship. You didn't ask to be born, and Franco took advantage of you," María José said, her voice soothing. Spain could practically feel her trying to hug him, and he clung to that feeling.

It was hard sometimes, dealing with the memories, with Francisco and Tomás being aggressive at best, and completely ripping any self-confidence Spain had at worst.

"They're not going to be here. You're safe," Juan said, and while Spain had his reasons to argue with that man, he knew to trust him on this.

"I wish that he had been able to work here longer, that he didn't have to flee. I wish...I wish that his art hadn't condemned him to that," Spain said.

"I think that's what gave his art power. It scared Franco. It scared the Nazis. Isn't it amazing that one of your people did that?" Elena asked, and Spain could feel the edges of their consciousnesses blurring

together as they began to share control.

A smile appeared on their face, and Spain didn't know if it was him or Elena.

"I suppose it is nice," Spain said, though he was leaving several things unspoken.

He hadn't been there, but it seemed that Picasso had had some sort of faith that Spain would be able to throw off the shackles of the man who had called himself Spain's father. That Picasso had faith that Spain would live to see democracy, even as Spain's life condemned Picasso's country to death.

What had Spain done to deserve that trust?

And why could he do to keep feeling like he deserved it?

La Guitarra

Prompt: Instrumentos

Lorencio Fernando Garsea Juan Alfonso Enrique Fabián Sebastián Castilla Catalan, more commonly known as Hispanic Empire was a man of very simple wishes, despite his great wealth and empire.

He was a man who loved his family, his guitar, and the company of a beautiful woman on beautiful nights.

It was deceptively easy, both when he was Hispanic Empire and when he was Lorencio.

With his guitar, women fell over themselves for him, and he didn't blame them. It was why he had written a special tune just for those women who found themselves in bed with him.

It was only the right thing to do, to share his gifts with the people who made life a little more joyful.

Hispanic Empire knew that his children and his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren did not understand why he made these choices, that they judged him and pretended his guitar somehow made him lesser because it was not an instrument of the high class.

Hispanic Empire knew that was a foolish thought. He was the monarchy and the empire, and nothing he did could ever make him less in society.

Hispanic Empire strummed his guitar as the Hispanic Monarchy approached him. Hispanic Empire smiled.

"Hello, my son. Do you need something?" Hispanic Empire asked. His family each had their own things to manage, as Hispanic Empire was a symbol of power, so he was rarely needed to do more important political things.

"You're too attached to that guitar," Hispanic Monarchy said. Hispanic Empire raised an eye, and his son sighed. "Father, your escapades are beginning to become gossip. The king wants you to put an end to it and control yourself better."

"I have done nothing wrong," Hispanic Empire said, but he relented anyway, knowing his one job was to keep the reputation of his empire positive. "But I will ensure my reputation stays as good as it can."

Hispanic Monarchy didn't look happy, but nodded and turned to leave. Hispanic Empire sighed, brushing his finger over the strings of his guitar.

His family were a strange bunch at times.

El Novio

Prompt: Los Flores

Costa Rica loved her boyfriend. It was so hard to have relationships with humans, with the nature of her kind and theirs always leaving things painfully unfinished.

But Costa Rica still loved Gabriel more than anything, even though she knew the love would hurt her in the end.

It was worth it to feel alive in that way.

It was the two-year anniversary of when they had gotten together, and Gabriel had invited Costa Rica to a small park near where she lived for a date. Costa Rica had asked not to be disturbed for the day, so that her country life would not get involved in her human one.

Costa Rica was so excited for this. Gabriel made her feel so human, and that was something few could provide.

"Miel!" Costa Rica heard her boyfriend call, and she turned to face him, seeing a bouquet of guaria morada in his hands.

"Hello, Gabriel. Are those for me?" Costa Rica asked, smiling. Her boyfriend was so *sweet*. Guaria morada was her national flower, and Gabriel was just the kind of sweet nerd to get her them as a gift.

"Yes. They're your national flower, so I thought you would like them," Gabriel said. Costa Rica took them before taking her boyfriend's hand.

"They weren't picked to be my national flower because they are my favorite, but this is amazing," Costa Rica said. It was so nice to see that her boyfriend cared so much that he would look for niche little details about her to find a way to make her day better.

Costa Rica pressed a small kiss to his cheek.

She had the most amazing boyfriend.

Nacimiento

Prompt: Ninitos

Mexico had been so worried and concerned about the Mexican-American War when it had first broken out. Her son, her precious baby boy, had thrown in his lot with United States, wanting to become one of his states.

It made her so angry. Her boy had tried to kill her and was now attempting to join another country. Republic of the Rio Grande had been killed. Yucatán was still running around claiming to be independent and doing his best to avoid her.

What had she done to deserve this? Why did the world keep taking her precious babies from her?

Grief paralyzed her many days. Her children had been murdered. Her children were still being murdered.

Rio Grande and Tejas had been wonderful to see, even if they hated her, because how could Mexico ever truly hate them after what had happened to their siblings?

And then there was Yucatán.

Mexico had never had a miracle like him.

Yucatán had been a girl before the new centrist government had killed him. Then his people had come together to bring him back, and although he was different, a boy now, not the girl who looked after her siblings he had been before, Mexico knew that the soul had to be the same.

Who cared if her daughter was now a son? He didn't choose what his soul decided to come back as. They were countries, not humans, and they operated on a different set of rules. God had given Mexico

a great gift and returned her child to her. She would never be ungrateful.

And God had blessed Mexico again.

Her 1824 Constitution was going to be restored. And with that, her still-gone children's states would be restored, and they would come back to life.

Mexico would not have to sit at their graves and ofrendas and sob for little lives cut too short.

August 22, 1846, was the day she would be allowed to live again, when her children were returned.

Mexico had been eagerly waiting for it to be reinstated, knowing from experience that while countries (or false countries) were born in their land, states were born near their country.

So Mexico waited. She waited for the remaining twenty of her kids to be returned to her.

When they were born, it was like a fire had been set alight in her chest, and there they were, familiar-unfamiliar faces.

"Oh, my babies," Mexico said, falling to her knees and holding out her arms, wanting so badly to hug them and apologizing for letting them die.

"Ma...mama?" one of them asked, and Mexico almost sobbed as she realized how their faces had faded from her memory, and how they might have been changed by their countryhuman nature.

"Yes. Oh, my babies, I am so sorry for failing you," Mexico said, even though she knew that they might not remember.

It didn't stop her from hugging, kissing, and crying over each one as she was reintroduced to them again.

Chiapas was a beautiful baby girl now, with chubby cheeks and a bright smile.

Chihuahua was still a girl, and it made Mexico so happy to see that not all of them had changed, that Chihuahua still looked like the person she had been in Mexico's memories.

Coahuila was still a boy, and he looked so similar, but his eyes were different; they were brown, deep, and beautiful, but still very different.

Durango was still a boy as well, but taller, with a proud look already developing on his face. If that meant he was going to be a handful, Mexico was so excited to see it.

Guanajuato was a girl now, with a crooked smile and mischievous eyes. Mexico was so excited to see her again.

Jalisco was a boy now, looking very similar to how he had before, just with shorter hair.

México, the son who shared her name, was still a son, and Mexico was grateful about that, knowing it would be very confusing otherwise. She wondered if her son and God had decided that on purpose.

Mexico City was still a girl, and Mexico couldn't help but be grateful for that. When she heard that they were bringing her states back, she had worried Ciudad would have decided to come back a boy, because society preferred boys for capitals. Some people already hated that their country was a woman.

Michoacán was a girl now, and her eyes sparkled with joy as she clung tight to Mexico.

Nuevo León was a boy now, a boy that so strongly resembled Mexico's grandfather that she wondered if the wrong countryspirit had been brought back, before seeing the smile of her daughter turned son and smiling, knowing that it was the right person who had been brought back.

Oaxaca was a girl, and she seemed so excited to be alive again, dancing and laughing with her siblings, unable to hold still.

Puebla still looked so much the same, but there was a new spark

and spunk in her eyes that told Mexico that she was a fighter.

Querétaro had a new smile but the same eyes, and Mexico was so excited to embrace her son again.

San Luis Potosí was still Luis, still a boy, though he seemed shyer than usual, though Mexico chalked it up to the effects of his death.

Zacatecas was now a boy, a hesitant curiosity in his eyes, one that melted after a tight hug from his mother.

Veracruz was a beautiful girl now, and she had such beautiful hair, and Mexico's heart burned with joy.

Sinaloa, her baby, was alive again, still with that same youthful face and beautiful eyes.

Sonora was a girl now; she seemed very attached to Sinaloa, as the two girls held hands and bore near-identical faces now. Mexico loved them both so much.

Tabasco was a boy, beautiful and strong, but clearly holding the same gentle soul he had had before.

Tamaulipas, the last of her newborn children, was now a beautiful girl. She was not Mexico's baby in the way Sinaloa had been, but Mexico had enough room in her heart for two babies.

Her children were back home where they belonged.

Mexico could never thank God enough for his mercy.

La Revolución

Prompt: Revolución!

Moralos would not lie and say she was happy with the government if anyone in her family were to ask. But if the public asked, she grit her teeth and did her best to grin and bear it, knowing that pissing off Porfirio Díaz would do nothing but get her into trouble.

Would do nothing but get her family into trouble, get them hurt.

And her Mama did not want that from them. She had seen how quickly the signing of a paper could murder Morelos and her siblings, and Mama would force herself to obey people who hated her, who abused and belittled her, if it kept Morelos and her siblings safe.

Morelos hated it as much as she appreciated her mother's love for her.

Morelos was a woman, which meant she had some practice in keeping her head down, as society demanded she should, but...there was still a part of her that was reaching her breaking point.

She wasn't the only one. She could see it in her siblings' eyes, how they were slowly being pushed to the brink, even little Quintana Roo, born only eight years prior.

The tension was rising. Something was going to give.

It was Francisco Madero who caused that tension to snap.

It hadn't been his intention, Morelos was sure. He had challenged Díaz for the presidency before he had been jailed before the election, to ensure that he would not win, that Díaz would keep his power.

It had been so obvious that it was Díaz who had done it. Madrero

had been a popular canadiante, and that action...Moralos could feel the tension growing as her people fought over what to do. She could see that her Mama did as well, as best as she tried to hide it.

Then, Madero had escaped, and Morelos and more than a few of her siblings had breathed a sigh of relief, knowing that it was probably a better fate to be on the run than in a prison controlled by a man who hated him for threatening his power.

It had also been nice to know that he was in San Antonio, in Tejas, and Morelos wished she could write a letter thanking her brother, estranged as they were, for looking after a man who did not deserve the consequences he was facing.

Díaz had dropped the subtlety again when he declared himself the winner by a landslide.

Morelos just grew *angrier*.

Why did this have to be the hand they were dealt? Why couldn't things be easier?

"Are you alright, Moralos?" Morelos heard her sister Puebla ask. Morelos nodded, hiding her emotions back under the mask. She wanted to trust her siblings, but that was hard too, with everyone all over the place in how they felt. Even if they could all agree that Díaz needed to go, some of them...the government had a tight grip on.

It hurt her to do this. But she didn't feel safe, even in the privacy of their home in the Land In Between.

"I'm fine," Morelos said, before noticing the look in Puebla's eyes. "What is it?"

"Tejas came to our house," Puebla said, her voice dropping to a whisper, "He gave something to Mama. Said it was from an old friend of hers."

Tejas? He hated them on the best of days, refusing to acknowledge anything about them or their relationship. He was content to live with his father and his siblings on that side, and while it hurt, hurt

badly, Moralos tried not to let it get to her.

Why had he come? Who was he delivering something from? Unless...

"Madero?" Morelos asked, her voice dropping to that same whisper.

"I think. I don't know what it is about or how Tejas got involved. I think...I think maybe Madero was trying to make sure he could get a message to Mama without Díaz getting in the way," Puebla said.

"Something big is coming. Díaz was so blatant, he won't be allowed to get away," Morelos said. Puebla made a strange face, and Morelos couldn't tell if it was good or bad.

"Are your people angry?" Puebla asked.

Morelos didn't answer.

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October 5, 1910

Sufragio Efectivo, No Re-elección.

That had been the slogan of the letter that Madero had just released, declaring the Díaz presidency illegal (as if that fact had ever been in doubt by anyone who had a brain), but more significantly, declaring for a revolt against Díaz and the fraudulent election. Declaring that the Federal Army generals needed to resign if there was ever to be democracy in Mexico again, as they were all in Díaz's pocket.

The letter excited Morelos as much as it scared her.

It didn't outline anything, clearly not a battle plan, but it offered hope to the people.

Morelos could feel that.

November 20.

If people actually took that date seriously, it could mean...it could mean a civil war, a revolt, any number of things that would tear apart their family, and surely tear apart their Mama as well.

Morelos had seen how she had tried to bear the weight of it all, so her children didn't have to.

Morelos didn't want her getting hurt.

But Díaz had proven that he would not allow democracy to exist in their country, no matter what peaceful solutions were tried.

Morelos would fight if she had to.

For her Mama.

For her siblings.

For her country.

Morelos would not allow Díaz to ruin her country anymore.

Juntos

Prompt: Comidas

Venezuela loved it when she was able to rope all of her states into doing something with her. It was hard, more often than not, given how many of them there were and how busy they often were.

But when they were able to, it was worth all the headaches that came from them being separated and unable to see each other in person.

It almost made Venezuela wish she were a smaller country, even though she loved every inch of her land. It was just hard, calling yourself a family but not seeing each other in person as often as you liked.

In that way, the Land In Between was a blessing, allowing them to be close with one another without having to go through the headache of traveling to each other's homes, especially in those early days.

"Mama, I need the plantains," Lara said, holding out her hands. Venezuela smiled and passed her the ones she had been cutting, ignoring the annoyed grumble from Miranda beside her.

"She can get them herself," he mumbled, and Venezuela laughed.

"We are meant to be working together," she said. Miranda rolled his eyes.

"Then why is Capital District not doing anything?" Miranda asked.

"I'm too young to use the stove," Capital District called, having overheard her brother.

"No, you aren't!" at least five states chorused, and Venezuela couldn't help the happy laughter that erupted from her chest at

that.

She adored these moments and treasured them more than anything.

There was nothing that meant more to her than her family. Even with all the issues she was facing, it was nice to know that they could still be happy together. It helped her know they would weather whatever storm came their way.

Food always had a way of bringing people together.

Isla de Pascua o Rapa Nui

Prompt: Territorios

Pascua or Rapa Nui?

That was a question the young daughter of Chile and the Ancient Rapa Nui asked herself often.

She knew she was a product of them both, that she held both of their cultures in her hands. She knew that she was raised by them both, having been lucky enough to know her native father before he passed, getting some thirty years with him.

She knew she was lucky.

That did not solve the issue of her name.

Her people were Polynesian, and she was as well, a corner in that infamous triangle.

But her father had had her live with him after her native father died, and she had grown up surrounded by Chilean culture that did not feel like her own.

She spoke Rapanui, how could she not, but she watched as the speakers of that language grew less, as more and more began to speak Spanish and forget her native father in favor of her father.

Did that mean she had to be Pascua?

But...she didn't feel like that was okay for all her people who loved and cherished their Polynesian roots, who spoke to her in Rapanui and spoke of stories of her native father and where they came from.

She didn't feel like it was good to just throw that aside when the Polynesian side of her family loved and cherished her, gave her another home, more family than she could have ever wished, family

that did not belong to her father or her siblings, but just to her.

She knew she was not the only one in that family with an issue over their names. She had spoken with Aotearoa New Zealand about it before, and had seen how he felt happier making his name them both, the English and the Māori, both sides of him uniting.

She saw how others discarded the names that had been given to them by others and embraced their native names, the familiar Polynesian sounds rolling from their lips like water.

She wanted their confidence.

She knew she did not discard one side of her family by choosing to refer to herself by the name they used, but it still felt like a betrayal.

It still hurt, somewhere deep inside.

Both of the names she had to pick from were new to her island, new to her people, not truly belonging to her native father, names just for her.

If only she had a singular name.

But...she knew that she was indigenous. She knew that people from her community were called Rapa Nui. She knew in her human form that her father's people called her that, associated her more with her native peoples than with her father's.

That had never changed.

So many, if her father's people saw her true face and called her Rapa Nui, then her true name was Rapa Nui.

Rapa Nui wasn't sure how long she was going to be happy with that.

But it felt good right now.

She was Rapa Nui. Rapa Nui's father's people called her that, and her Polynesian friends and family called her that.

Maybe she would always be Pascua to her father, but to the rest of the world, she seemed to be Rapa Nui.

And Rapa Nui was happy with that.

Las características masculinas

Prompt: Animales Nacionales

Guatemala would never say she hated the quetzal features that she had. They were beautiful, and she enjoyed the freedom that her wings brought her.

She loved the color of her wing feathers and the colors of the feathers on her arms.

It was her tail feathers that really bothered her.

Like all countries with animal features, Guatemala had done her research on the animal that made her up, both to find reasons for any instincts she might have, and so she could know her own limits.

And, like most birds, the tail feathers differed from male to female quetzals.

And since her body had been created for the wrong gender, Guatemala had the long, sweeping tail feathers of a male quetzal, not the shorter ones of a female quetzal.

Guatemala supposed that if she had never researched it, maybe she would be more okay with the features she had been given, as, after all, in humans nowadays, the female was the one who was seen as more flamboyant.

The tail feathers fit what gender she was from a human perspective, but only if they didn't understand birds.

So it hardly made her feel better.

It didn't help that the feathers were long, dragging against the floor as she walked as they proportioned themselves to a human body.

They were an annoyance.

They were something she could never get rid of.

And they didn't belong to the human side of her, so even if she tried to get hormones to help fix her body to what it was meant to be, would that affect them? Would that allow the two sides of her, country and human, to both match her gender?

Guatemala didn't know. She could discuss and debate it with biologists all she wanted, ask Australia about his experiences with hormones and animal features, but every countryhuman was a biological anomaly in their own way, and Guatemala had learned not to be so hopeful that she sets herself up for failure.

It had made it hard to even look at regular quetzals, something that was so hard in her country. It was her national bird, it was the name of her currency, it was so baked into the fabric of her country that, of course, she couldn't avoid it, but...

Why did it have to be the tail feathers, the biggest difference between the male and female quetzals?

Why couldn't all of her features have been more ambiguous?

In many ways, it felt like a curse or punishment.

Maybe it was.

That never stopped Guatemala from feeling envious of the female quetzals she saw flying around her country.

La Muerte

Prompt: Un Momento Para Llorar...

Panama didn't want to say she was happy about the coming death of her daughter. She didn't want to acknowledge how her people were celebrating that the Panama Canal Zone was coming to an end and that the canal was being returned to Panamanian hands.

Panama knew her people's joy was her joy, even if it burned the inside of her mouth to want her daughter to die.

Panama, the country, was conflicting with Panama, the person, and it hurt.

Panama had asked United States to have custody of their daughter when this happened, unable to watch her die, unable to see...unable to see that happen, and knowing a part of her would be happy.

Panama was now packing up her daughter's room, a growing dread inside her.

Would she feel her child die?

It wasn't like Panama Canal Zone was Panama's only child, but Latin American Parliament was an organization and did not spend time with Panama as mother and daughter, as that was not the role they could have, not with the way society viewed organizations close to one country with suspicion.

Then there was Guna Yala.

Guna Yala was an autonomous zone for one of the native groups, and therefore had her issues with Panama, preferring to spend time with her native parent.

Panama couldn't blame her.

It didn't stop something from burning deep inside her. It was so funny. Panama Canal Zone was, in many ways, United States', and yet she was the daughter that Panama had been closest to, despite everything.

Maybe it was how quickly they had been born back to back, how Panama Canal Zone had been there for Panama's entire life.

Panama Canal Zone had been a constant throughout Panama's entire life.

A symbol of United States' power over her country.

A presence that had always been there for Panama.

Panama picked up a photo her daughter had framed, of Panama Canal Zone and Puerto Rico, smiling on a beach.

Panama's knees gave out as she clutched the photo to her chest, tears escaping her eyes as the reality of the situation was hitting her.

Death for their kind was terrifying.

Was her daughter scared? Did Panama Canal Zone know how Panama's people were going to celebrate? Did she think that Panama would celebrate her death?

Panama had so many questions, but she couldn't bring herself to move, knowing that seeing any part of it would ruin her more than the way ifs.

Maybe it was selfish, but wasn't that what countries were best at?

Panama deserved to control her own land. She deserved to control the canal that bore her name and was so important to the world.

Panama just wished it wouldn't have to come with the death of an innocent.

Panama Canal Zone might have been a symbol of her father's power, but she was not her father.

She was just a little girl who tried so hard to be good and was hated so much in Panama's country that it only pushed her to spend more time with her father.

"I'm sorry," Panama eventually whispered to an empty room. "I'm sorry you have to die."

There was no way that Panama could have manipulated things to let her child live.

It didn't stop the regret.

At least they lived in an age of cameras.

Panama would never have to worry that she would forget Panama Canal Zone's face.

El Parto

Prompt: ...Y Un Momento Para Reir

Panama was about to gain another autonomous zone. Another child. Another real personification for the native peoples that lived in her land.

While Panama knew the chance of this child living with her as opposed to their other mother and namesake, Embera–Wounaan, Panama was still happy. In many ways, she liked being a mother, and in many others, it dulled the pain felt by Panama Canal Zone's loss.

Panama was going to meet with Embera–Wounaan that morning, that way they would both be there when the child was born, so they could both meet her and know her, and ultimately let her choose who she would live with.

Even if a selfish part of Panama wanted to take Emberá-Wounaan Comarca, take that child back home with her and raise whoever they were.

Panama must be cursed, to have so many children and being unable or unallowed to raise any of them.

But...but at least she got to be in their lives.

It was a small, but important mercy.

"Hello, Embera–Wounaan," Panama said when she caught sight of the other woman, proud and sure in her steps, even if she was not very tall, projecting an aura of confidence.

"Hello, Panama," Embera–Wounaan replied in Panama's language, though there was tension in her shoulders. She didn't trust Panama.

Panama didn't know why that seemed to surprise her so much.

"I will not fight if you take Emberá-Wounaan Comarca into your custody, as they are being created for your people and are your district to govern, but I would like to be able to visit," Panama said, hoping that the words would soothe the distrust.

She had to be willing to make sacrifices about her personal feelings in order to make this indigenous territory mean something to the people it was made for.

"Thank you," Embera–Wounaan said, seemingly a little surprised, but still happy nevertheless.

There was a small, slightly awkward wait, as they both knew the child was coming, but were unable to do much until they were born, until Panama felt the familiar tugging of a child coming, and relaxed some, knowing not only would it break the tension...it was her child, here for the first time.

Emberá-Wounaan Comarca was a daughter, a beautiful girl, dark eyes and hair that resembled Embera–Wounaan so strongly.

But Panama could see a little of herself there, too.

"Hello," Panama said, as Embera–Wounaan moved to her knees, whispering softly in her own language.

Panama didn't try to interrupt that, feeling the weight of the moment on her.

Emberá-Wounaan Comarca smiled at her native mother before turning to Panama.

"You're my mom too," she said, and it struck Panama again how odd it was that their children were so...grown for ones so young.

"Yes. I would love to get to know you, but I know you have a duty to Embera–Wounaan and her people, and I know that it is not my place to hurt that," Panama said, the words hurting, but important.

She hated those who hid their intentions under pretty words, who lied and twisted things for their own advantage, seeing her as a young country, a young girl, and thinking she was so easily tricked.

Panama would never be that person.

She refused to be.

"I want...I want to know you too. That's important," the little one said, and Panama smiled, pulling her daughter into a hug.

She knew she was blessed by that decision.

And Panama knew better than to waste it.

Las personas transgéneros

Prompt: Amistad

Spain had known for his entire life that he was a man. He had known it for so long that it hurt so badly every time he was made to wear a dress and play the role of a submissive woman, a good woman, every time Franco called for it.

It hurt so badly that Elena had to do it, take over, so Spain did not have to feel the weight of eyes on him as he tried so hard to act as if...as if he truly felt that way.

The days he had too already left him feeling terrible, horrible, as if there was a pressure clawing at his chest and his throat, clawing away at him.

As happy as he was to be free of the dictatorship, to find a new path forward, he was also happy to finally be himself.

Maybe so many people weren't willing to hear it, and Spain wouldn't deny that a part of himself hated himself for being a man, but he was free of that oppressive silence in his throat and the clawing in his chest.

It was still a new thing, to walk around with his hair cut short, wearing men's clothes as he did his best to hide his boobs behind bandages.

He loved it. He hated it. It scared him, and it freed him.

Spain was lucky to have made it to this point.

"Simón!" Spain heard his friend, Maria Carmen, call as he approached her. He and Maria Carmen had met a little over a year ago, and had become fast friends because they were the same, the

wrong body for their gender (after all, just because the body was right for Elena and others didn't mean Spain had to like it. It made any discussion of surgery like Australia had had hard).

"Maria Carmen! Are you okay?" Spain asked, noticing that his friend had a small bruise on her face. Maria Carmen frowned, her hand going to the bruise, before her face changed to a smile.

"I'm okay," she said, her voice quiet, but becoming prouder, "My father finally found out. He wasn't happy."

Spain nodded, knowing that feeling well.

Some of the others berated him for wanting to be himself, and they shared a body; Spain couldn't escape them.

He knew the pain of rejection.

"You're too good for him anyway. He's a piece of shit," Spain said, letting a small smile flicker onto his face, as he tried to reassure his friend the same way he wished people had reassured him.

"I know. It still hurts. I had...I knew it was an unlikely dream, but I really wanted him to be happy about it," Maria Carmen said, bringing her arms around herself as if she was trying to hide from her feelings. Spain pulled out his pack of cigarettes, silently offering her one.

Maria Carmen took it, letting Spain light it before gesturing for Spain to follow her as they began their weekly walk down to the local park.

Spain didn't live here; he still felt...scared to move out of the home that he had been made to live in, unsure of where he was supposed to go, still trying to figure things out, but if he did move, he'd like to be here, with people like him.

Spain didn't want to feel like a freak, and although there was nothing that could be done about the people in his head, at least he would be a man here without too many weird looks.

"I wish my abuelo had lived long enough for me to tell him. I think

he would have accepted me, because our family was so few...he wouldn't have wanted to lose anymore," Spain said, sighing deeply as he put one of his hands in his pocket.

"What about your aunts? Do they know?" Maria Carmen asked.

They hadn't discussed family much, knowing it was a painful subject for outcasts like them, but Maria Carmen knew a little about his living family, not the colonies from before Spain was even alive, but the ones he had lived with for his entire life.

It left Spain with very few family members, despite the fact that the blood of his grandfather existed everywhere, on all continents.

"They know, but they don't live in Spain anymore. I don't see them a lot, so...I don't really know how they feel. I don't think they like it, but they...I don't know," Spain said, his shoulders slumping, "I don't know."

Equatorial Guinea and Sahrawi were glad that their time as colonies was over, and they weren't eager to be beholden to Spain again.

He knew they cared in some ways, but...there were still so many differences.

"At least we have each other," Maria Carmen said with a smile. "Who gives a damn about family? Friends are good enough."

"That's blasphemous," Spain couldn't help but comment with a smile, ducking the playful hit Maria Carmen sent his way, laughing as he did so.

He was so lucky to have friends who accepted him.

It was the best gift he had ever been given.

Pintora

Prompt: Colores!

Catamarca loved painting. She loved painting people and things.

She especially loved painting her siblings, making portraits she hoped would stand the test of time so that many who came after them would be able to know what they looked like and who they were.

Of course, she wasn't always the most realistic in her art.

Some liked realism.

Catamarca liked the brightest colors she could buy. Her siblings, painted in the rainbows, colors that maybe hurt the eyes, but she could still make them work together.

"Your art is so bright," Argentina said to her once. Catamarca had just laughed.

"Good. It makes me happy. We deserve some brightness," Catamarca said, a small smile on her face as she continued drawing the features of her brother's face.

"I don't think I'd look good in pink," Argentina said. Catamarca laughed.

"You will."

Her voice was confident, something that came from her experience with her art style.

Catamarca liked her colors.

It was the defining feature of her art, and would be that way for as long as she could keep it that way.

Las lenguas indígenas

Prompt: Lengua

Bolivia had never been one to be invested in learning his indigenous languages. Perhaps that was a flaw on his part, but it was deep in the fabric of his history to be...anything but that.

But now he would not have to learn.

He would *know*.

It was in his new constitution that he would have all indigenous languages in his country as his official languages. He had thirty-six languages listed by name.

He had been told some of them were extinct, and that made him pause.

No one spoke those languages anymore. They were gone from this Earth. But with a single piece of paper, they would be given new life again, and Bolivia would become their caretaker, looking after the words of the forgotten, holding onto the last breaths of a people that might be gone now.

It was a heavy weight to bear, holding the languages of so many cultures, cultures that could be dead or dying.

Spanish was always going to be his original native tongue, but now he was going to gain so many more.

How would that affect the way he saw the world, with so much knowledge he had not been allowed to know, with thirty-six new positions given to him, burned into his very being with their language?

Bolivia was nervous. He was afraid this would change him, although in what way he didn't know. It was just some new

languages.

And yet it was everything. Communication, long forgotten tongues, a symbol that he was finally going to protect his native peoples.

And perhaps, in many ways, a sign.

A sign that the Native Americans from both Americas were not gone, but thriving.

Languages had so many meanings.

Bolivia wondered what meanings the rest of the world would take from this.

La Herida

Prompt: Cicatriz

Guatemala had been walking through her capital, shoulders heavy with the weight of the civil war happening in her country, when a shot rang out.

The pain had come so suddenly.

Guatemala gritted her teeth as the pain threatened to overwhelm her. The wound hurts so badly she could hardly believe it was on her arm.

It was overwhelming.

She knew civil wars were hardly a clean thing, but something about the fact that one of her people had shot her, shot her when she was wearing her flag face.

"Mr. Guatemala!" Guatemala heard someone yell, and she groaned, her hands tightening around the gunshot wound.

She felt someone pick her up, and her head spun, wings drawing closer to her body, before the pain finally overwhelmed her, and blackness took over.

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Guatemala woke up in less pain.

Physically, that is. The pain of one her people shooting her was still so overwhelming.

Guatemala began to lift her head up, looking over her body, and seeing that her shoulder was bandaged.

"Guatemala, you're awake. How are you feeling?" the doctor said,

walking over from the other side of the room.

"It doesn't hurt as much as it did...how long have I been asleep?" Guatemala asked, quickly changing the conversation, knowing that she needed to know how much she could have missed and how many things could have changed in such a short amount of time.

"You have been asleep for at least a day, although I don't know when you passed out. We removed the bullet and bandaged the wound, although it is too early to say whether or not it will scar," the doctor said. Guatemala closed her eyes and nodded, sending a silent prayer for the wound not to scar, so she would never have to see it and think about the person who tried to kill her.

She would hope and pray, but she knew her kind were not that lucky.

"Thank you, sir," Guatemala said, "I would like to have some time alone now."

The doctor nodded and left, and Guatemala sat up, readjusting her position so she was not sitting on her wings, moving onto the side where the wound wasn't, so she was not crushing her tail feathers either.

She hoped this civil war would be over soon. She wasn't sure how much more she could take.

Cabello Afro

Prompt: Pelo

Dominican Republic was an outlier in many ways.

She was very far away from Spanish-speakers like herself, even with Puerto Rico and Cuba close by. She was still...she was still an outlier.

She still looked more black than she did like any of her other family members.

It had been so hard, early on, when she could hide her skin behind her flag, but not hide her hair, her hair, which was kinky and thick, black hair, and something that marked her as different in a world where she was already fighting, so, so hard for basic respect.

She had tried to convince herself that that was why no one showed her any respect, even if she knew that wasn't true, even though she knew people would always find a way to disrespect her, because they saw her, like all countries in the Americas, as lesser than the European "*civilizers*."

She knew there was little she could do to gain it, because they did not want to give it to her.

It didn't stop her from thinking, hoping, in some way, shape or form that she could somehow hide what made her a little less white for the world, change so maybe she would have a little more respect.

Maybe not from the Europeans, but at least...at least from her fellow Americans.

United States and his people were lost causes, so caught up in delusions of their own grandeur, that they didn't realize they were seen as just as backwards as Dominican Republic herself.

But her cousins, her aunts, her uncles, maybe those people weren't lost causes.

Dominican Republic was going to try anyway, straightening her hair and doing everything she could to blend in.

She needed to blend in.

She needed to be normal.

And that meant she couldn't have black hair.

No Hablo Español

Prompt: Diaspora

It hadn't dawned on him slowly. It had been more of a sudden realization.

He had been looking through some of his old things, long buried in the back of his room. He wasn't sure what brought on this bout of nostalgia, but maybe it was how so much had changed, becoming American, the...the war, then military government, Florida was thinking about what it had been like before the changes.

Florida then smiled as he brought out a familiar journal, laughing slightly.

"Oh, I had forgotten about you," Florida said, more to himself than anything. He had gotten this journal when he was young, a gift from his birth father to help him practice writing.

New Spain had always been so worried they were going to be illiterate because of the Native peoples in their land, and how they...how they used oral communication, but rarely written.

At least they were learning better now.

Florida pulled open the book, eager to read his thoughts, his lessons, and practices, because he didn't think about his time as a Spanish colony very often anymore, nor his time as a British colony, not unless he was quietly comparing things with other former British colonies.

Maybe it hadn't been healthy to forget, but...remembering made it harder to change at times.

Besides, there were few others to talk about being Spanish with, because Louisiana had always been more French than Spanish, and

New Mexico...well, distance and the war had soured things a lot.

So Florida had opened the book and prepared to read.

That's when he ran into his first problem, the horrifying and worst problem.

He was...he was struggling to read the Spanish.

Florida swallowed hard and flipped through the pages.

Maybe it was just some bad handwriting, or an older dialect of Spanish that was making it hard to read.

That...that had to be it.

But as he flipped through more and more pages, it never became any clearer.

He could read some, the words that were simpler and more basic, but not...not the more complicated words.

He was forgetting to speak Spanish.

His first language, the language he had spoken for his entire life, and he was forgetting it.

Florida slammed the book shut and swallowed, trying to get rid of his panic.

How could he have forgotten?

How could he have forgotten his first language?

Florida needed to figure out how to learn it again, relearn it.

He couldn't forget that. It meant that he would be unable to remember so much from his childhood, and maybe he had been forgetting, but he didn't want to lose everything.

Sure, he had Louisiana and New Mexico, but he also loved Puerto Rico and Cuba and...and the survivors of the Latin American Wars of Independence, because so many had died in the wars of

independence that Florida had very little biological family that he had been close to before he began Spanish, then British, then Spanish, then finally American.

He didn't want to lose the ability to talk to them someday.

Florida walked over to New Mexico's door and rapped his knuckles against it.

New Mexico opened the door, and Florida smiled, feeling very uncomfortable.

"Hola, Nueva. Yo tengo una pregunta," Florida said, feeling some part of him relax more as he was able to speak Spanish. It was something, letting him know it wasn't all gone.

"What is it?" New Mexico asked, choosing to speak English. Florida felt his stomach roll, wondering if that was somehow a message to him, that they were American now and needed to speak English, despite the fact that most of their neighbors spoke Spanish.

"I am forgetting to speak Spanish, and I don't want to. I...I can't. It was my first language and I need to know it. Can you help me practice so I can relearn, not forget anymore?" Florida asked.

"My Spanish isn't what you are looking for. I borrow words from Native American languages, and I keep things archaic. If you want to continue to speak with the países hispanohablantes, you need to talk to Dad," New Mexico said, and Florida thought her smile was sad, apologizing.

"Are you sure?"

"I blend together what all my people speak. My parents, and now America's. It's a mix of what I know, a language known by me and my people. New Mexican Spanish is just that, New Mexican. Dad actually knows modern Spanish. He...he can help you more than I can," New Mexico said, before reaching out and grabbing Florida's hand. "Come on. I can help you ask."

His sister knew him too well.

She knew he would never feel comfortable talking to America about something like this because of all that had been done to destroy their relationship.

He just hoped that America would be willing to help.

Florida didn't want to forget.

Santiago

Prompt: Non-Hispanic Formerly Spanish Colonies

Santiago was scared. He was so scared.

He had known that his fortifications were not the most up-to-date, but he didn't...he didn't...he didn't think that England was going to invade his lands, take him from his family, and make him an English colony.

But it had happened.

And now Santiago was English.

And he was scared as to what that meant.

He had been shackled and stuffed in a boat, and Santiago knew he was being taken back to England.

When they arrived, he was taken before the personifications, before the leaders.

He didn't speak a word of English, and he hoped that...that it wouldn't hurt him.

The girl nation had a very calculating look on her face, something cold and terrifying. The human man near her seemed to be just as terrifying.

Then there were the other two. The man that Santiago recognized as England, and another boy, one who had his head bowed, as if he didn't want to be there.

Santiago felt he had the most in common with that boy.

"Hello, Jamaica," England said, stepping forward, his Spanish accented but understandable.

"Jamaica?" Santiago asked, unsure of what that meant, but having a feeling regardless.

Santiago was too Spanish of a name for an English colony.

"Your new name," England said, before kneeling down and unlocking the shackles, whispering in Santi—in Jamaica's ear. "I apologize for the theatrics, but Cromwell is a paranoid man. You're a part of his plans, so he wants to make sure you cannot escape."

Those words didn't help his fears, but he could tell England had some sympathy for Jamaica and...and perhaps hated his leader and what had happened as much as Jamaica decided he had.

Even if he knew that didn't mean he was ever going to be given back. No empire gave up colonies, especially with how few colonies England had compared to Jamaica's father.

The girl turned to the human man—Cromwell, maybe—saying something in English before turning to England and saying something else.

England's face was blank and impassive, as if he couldn't express what he was feeling—whether that was because of fear or because he didn't feel anything Jamaica didn't know.

"You're going to be with me and learn English," England said, before turning to the girl, something hard in his eyes. "And if you're lucky, once you're fluent, you'll be sent back home and won't have to interact with either of them."

"What about the boy?" Jamaica asked, turning to the boy who had not moved at all since Jamaica arrived in the room, despite everything going on around him.

"What about him? He's nothing important," England said, before helping Jamaica to his feet. "He is not normally at these things, but they are trying to find some use for him. He is a landless and peopleless countryhuman, but cannot die regardless of that."

Jamaica felt a chill go down his spine as he turned back to the boy, who had looked up at him and accidentally made eye contact with

him.

Something about a being like that seemed like a bad omen.

"Oh. How?" Jamaica asked, knowing that he had never heard of that boy before, knowing that if it had been made public knowledge, his family, and especially France, would have used it so much against England.

"I don't know. But that is not important. You're an English colony now, not a Spanish one, so we need to begin the process of having you look and act like one," England said, putting a hand on Jamaica's back and guiding him out of the room.

Guerra de los Ochenta Años

Prompt: Non-Hispanic Formerly Spanish Colonies

Netherlands had known warfare for most of her life. It had become familiar, if not horrifying, to watch as her men were killed by the cruel hands of the Spanish, unable to let Netherlands go.

Unable to let her free herself from her chains, unable to let her practice her religion in peace.

It was hard, with war dragging on so long, and with people refusing to see her as the personification of the Netherlands with her father, the colony of the Netherlands still alive.

It was so infuriating. She was a country and her father was a colony. Was a country not better than a colony, forever enslaved to another power, unable to truly think for themself. Was a country where they were allowed to practice Protestantism better than living in the nation of the so-called Defender of the Catholic Church, who would have someone killed for not being Catholic?

She knew she didn't exist when this revolt, when this war still began, but that didn't mean she didn't believe in the ideas of what they were doing, that didn't mean she wasn't ready to take command of her nation and lead them into prosperity, lead them into being a colonial power of her own.

She had been preparing herself for it for so long, between battles and patching up wounded men, meeting with other nations that were willing to recognize her, Protestant nations recognizing the danger she was in if she were to lose.

Netherlands knew if she lost, she would not be allowed to live to see the aftermath, the very ideas she represented too much of a threat, and with that Spanish bastard having his own puppet Netherlands, who would kill her people and dismantle everything

she had managed to make.

She would not let that happen.

Netherlands was going to be an independent country, even if she had to fight for another forty years.

She would not be a colony. She would not be Catholic.

She was Dutch, Protestant, and proud of it.

She knew who she was, and she was fighting for it.

And she would claim it.

She felt bad for the poor colony, never able to think like she could, know their people like she could, but he had to die as well.

It was for the best.

Death was going to be the only thing that brought her poor father peace.

Las Islas

Prompt: Afuera

"That fish looks like Cuba," Puerto Rico said, giggling slightly as his brother glared at him from the other end of the boat.

"I can and will push you off this boat," Cuba deadpanned, causing Dominican Republic to roll her eyes.

"Why did I agree to spend time with you two again?" she asked in exasperation.

"Island solidarity," Puerto Rico and Cuba chorused without missing a beat.

"Island solidarity, and yet here we are in the middle of nowhere. Whose islands are we close to anyway?" Dominican Republic said, seeing a faint outline of an island on the horizon, but not knowing much about their direction other than the fact that they left from Cuba.

"Santiago. We joked about kidnapping Rida, but his people are far too intense, even if we do have our resident United Statian on board," Cuba said, causing Dominican Republic to furrow her brows.

"Who's Santiago?" Dominican Republic asked.

"Jamaica. He used to go by Santiago, back in the day, before he was captured by England," Puerto Rico said. "He's super English now and barely thinks of any of us as family, but he's more willing to not care about us. It's strange."

"All your relations are," Dominican Republic muttered. Cuba laughed.

"New Spain was an abusive control freak, Spanish Empire was just

really horny, and the Kingdom of Spain of the time stayed in his country and tried to keep the many, many subdivisions there from fighting. Things were going to get weird," Cuba said with a laugh.

"We'd better start snorkeling soon, I want to get away from this conversation," Dominican Republic commented, causing Puerto Rico to laugh again.

"What happened to the island former Spanish colony solidarity?" Puerto Rico asked, a broad grin on his face.

"It died a painful death with this unwanted conversation," Dominican Republic said, sighing deeply. Her family was great, but they could be so annoying at times, especially with how...relaxed they were about topics that really shouldn't be talked about.

"Sorry, Dominicana," Cuba said, a small grin on his face but sheepishness in his voice. Dominican Republic waved a hand in his direction.

"No, I should have known this would happen hanging out with you two. You have a reputation for being this way," Dominican Republic said, giving her own small smile and laugh.

"Well, this is what you get for being a part of the boat crew," Puerto Rico said, moving closer to Dominican Republic, putting an arm over her shoulder. "And we love you for it."

"I love you too," Dominican Republic said, knowing that despite how annoying her family could be, they were still her family.

And spending time with her family, even if it was in a boat in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, was worth their lack of social grace.

La Nueva

Prompt: Colonial Legacies

New Mexico had experienced so many changes in her life. She had seen so much, being on the older side when it came to personifications in the Americas.

She had been a Spanish colony, a Mexican territory, an American territory, and now an American state.

Three nationalities, so many identities, and so much change as she fit herself into the role expected for her by the power in control.

It made her think a lot about herself and the ways she had changed herself over the years. But, sometimes New Mexico was not sure if that change was good or bad, if she had really chosen to change and grow of her own accord, or if the decision had been forced on her by people who wanted something out of her that she did not provide.

"Xico?" New Mexico heard Arizona, her best friend and sister, ask.

"What is it?" New Mexico asked, before wincing slightly at how...annoyed she sounded.

"Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to annoy you," Arizona said. New Mexico just gave her a small smile.

"It's okay. I was just lost in old memories of when I was Spain's colony," New Mexico said.

"We became states so close together I forget how old you are," Arizona said with a small laugh, moving to sit next to New Mexico and putting her head on New Mexico's shoulder.

"I'm younger than Dad," New Mexico said. Arizona snorted.

"Only Rico and Rida are older than Dad, and you're the oldest after

them, so that doesn't mean much," Arizona said with a small giggle. New Mexico rolled her eyes.

"You're just a little baby," New Mexico commented.

"Excuse you, I'm battle born," Arizona said, wearing that label with pride, even though it came from so much pain and the remains of a dead man.

"I know, I know," New Mexico said, before his voice began to trail off.

"What are you thinking about?" Arizona asked.

"Not the nicest of things," New Mexico said, clenching her hands as if it would erase the sensation of blood on them.

"Do you want to be thinking about that?" Arizona asked.

"I want to think more on my relationship with my birth father," New Mexico said, frowning.

She had loved him, she really had, but looking back on it, he had....he had encouraged her to do bad things, to think bad things, and had wanted New Mexico to subjugate her own mother, had encouraged it, saying it would make her a true Spaniard.

And she had wanted it, because she loved him and had wanted to do good by him. She wanted to prove she could be better than her mother, and he was so determined to remind New Mexico of the lesser status of her mother.

"Was it good?" Arizona asked, even though New Mexico knew she had to know the answer, with how open Florida was about what New Spain had done to him.

"No."

"But you loved him?"

"Yes. But I don't know why sometimes," New Mexico said. "He wasn't the best to me. I was a prop to his own reputation, it felt like

sometimes."

"Only sometimes?" Arizona asked.

"Yeah, sometimes. He was...he tried to be a good dad, but felt like it meant we all had to be Spanish, and that we couldn't be anything else. He was scared, I think, that we were one bad day away from being murdered. After the Pueblo Revolt, when my mother and her fellow Puebloans drove us away, he clung close to me. I think he was so afraid I was going to die," New Mexico said, before her voice became quiet, "it was so scary to see him like that."

"So he did care," Arizona said. New Mexico nodded before she saw a mischievous smile spread across her sister's face. "But Dad's better than him, isn't he?"

"Of course," New Mexico said, before pressing a kiss to her sister's forehead.

She elected not to mention the pressure to Americanize.

Arizona didn't need that right now.

Besides...her dad had been trying to help.

He really had. And New Mexico was born as a colony. She was good at adapting, at fitting herself to the role she was now understanding.

Although she had to say, this was the most comfortable she had felt in a role in a long time. She knew her niece had loved her, and still loved her, but...her dad was her dad, and he was so very different in such a wonderful way.

New Mexico missed some of what had been, but she was very happy with the now.

La Guerra de Tarahumara

Prompt: Indigenous Peoples

Rarámuri was used to seeing some people pass through his land, seeing people stop by, allies and enemies alike, knowing that he was not alone in the world.

But these new people were different.

Change had been great when he first saw the white people entering his lands. Diseases had been horrible, new trade goods had appeared, and rumors of the deaths of people's spirits had spread, though Rarámuri dismissed them as the usual tales people liked to tell about things they did not understand.

But when the white people came, Rarámuri realized he may have been too quick to dismiss things as tales.

Because Rarámuri now knew something had to be done about the invaders in his land.

He knew that something had to be done when the first raids began, when the foreigners began to attack his towns and people, kidnapping whoever they could take, taking them to their newly built town, the raiding headquarters, where the kidnapped people disappeared forever.

It was not something that could go unanswered.

They had to pay the price for what they were doing.

So Rarámuri and his people prepared for their assault against the white foreigners' town. They planned to destroy it completely, both to send a message to the invaders and to prevent any more attacks on his people, once these men lost their foothold in his land.

Rarámuri could not allow it to remain. To do so would destroy him

and his people, as the raiders had never stopped, taking more and more, and sending them far away, to lands where Rarámuri and his people would not be able to get them back.

Rarámuri and his leaders prepared with the kind of focus brought on by a mission that was important to not just proving they were not pushovers to these invaders, but a mission that was important to Rarámuri's survival.

These new invaders seemed to care not for him, wanted him gone.

But this was Rarámuri's land, his home, and the people fighting alongside him were his. He would destroy the invaders first.

Rarámuri would survive as he always had.

This would not be his end.

Guerra de las Malvinas

Prompt: Pride

Argentina quickly volunteered to be a part of the force to liberate Islas Malvinas. A part of him knew the junta was only proposing this to distract Argentina, his family, and his people from their crimes, and another part of Argentina knew the worst time to liberate his daughter was during this horrible junta, but most of him knew that getting her away from Britain's abuse was better done sooner, rather than leaving her to suffer.

Argentina would protect her from the pain and the judgment of the junta, sacrifice himself for her as he had done with all his children, and knew he could protect her.

Argentina would protect her.

It had been easy to take her islands, but Argentina had expected that, just like he was expecting—like he knew that Britain would not do anything about the liberation, because Britain cared not for his children—even though Islas Malvinas was not his child, but Argentina's—something that was made clear with every horrible story of abuse Argentina heard from Britain's former colonies.

Argentina had had nightmares of what that could mean for Islas Malvinas, especially since she was not just a stranger to him, but someone he had known, had loved, had cared for, before Britain came with his guns and weapons and forced Argentina to give up his custody of Islas Malvinas.

Britain hadn't even had a settlement there when he took Islas Malvinas from Argentina. He had an abandoned claim and a lust for power, so he took Argentina's daughter and had abused her, and, Argentina worried, manipulated Islas Malvinas to see Argentina as nothing more than an enemy.

When Argentina lay eyes on her again, a wave of relief had washed through him, as he had not seen his daughter in over a hundred years, not outside of pictures.

She was so much *older*, with a Union Jack branding the side of her face, and sheep features that had changed her appearance so much, another ploy by Britain to enforce his claims on her, because that was not something that could be undone, something that would forever tie her to Britain.

Islas Malvinas was being held by two soldiers, one who was a bit too close to her for Argentina's liking.

"Let go of her," Argentina barked, snapping out of his awestruck trance and walking towards them. The soldiers did as ordered, and Argentina walked closer, feeling his heart twist as he saw that Islas Malvinas regarded him with suspicion, as if he was going to hurt her.

"Are you hurt?" Argentina asked. Islas Malvinas blinked, before pausing, as if she was thinking for a moment, before shaking her head.

"**I was not hurt,**" she replied in English, and Argentine felt his heart twist again. He had thought that the pause was maybe her preparing a lie, to cover up something that Britain had done to her, but did she truly not understand her native language anymore?

"**Do you understand Spanish?**" Argentina asked, this time in English. His daughter shook her head.

"**I am a British colony. English is my official language,**" Islas Malvinas said, and Argentina felt the bitter anger he had towards Britain grow, staining his tongue with its taste, "**I haven't learned much Spanish.**"

"**Don't worry,**" Argentina said, quick to reassure her, not liking how nervous Islas Malvinas seemed. He was not like Britain. He was not going to hurt his child. "**I'll help you relearn. No one will hurt you for not being perfect at it right away. They all know you were a captive of Britain for a long time. Everyone is just**

happy to see you home where you belong."

As if the universe had heard that, Argentina's flag was raised over the island, and Islas Malvinas flag changed from the one Britain had forced on her to a pale copy of Argentina's, and the bond, which had been faint since Argentina arrived on the islands, firmly snapped back into place, connecting father and daughter once more.

"**I suppose that I will be living in your home now?**" Islas Malvinas asked, her tone still nervous and uncertain, as if she was not sure how to handle this.

"**In the Land In Between,**" Argentina began, before dropping his voice to a whisper, learning closer to Islas Malvinas, "**I will not have you live in my human house until the junta is gone. I know that this is not the best time for you to rejoin us, but I promise with my breath and body that I will protect you from them. They will not hurt you. You are *safe.***"

Islas Malvinas still looked uncertain, but Argentina knew this had to be better than the abuse, better than staying with a man who had nearly beaten his grandson to death.

"**Father is going to come to reclaim me. Are you ready for that kind of war?**" Islas Malvinas then said, and Argentina's stomach dropped, his heart clenching as tears, unbidden, leaped into his eyes.

"**Who is father?**" Argentina asked, unable to keep the shake from his voice, even though he was sure he already knew the answer.

He still needed to know the confirmation, to know...to know what had been done to his child.

What lies she had been fed, the way she had been manipulated until she was the stranger, but nevertheless his daughter, in front of him.

"**Britain. He is my father. I thought that was known,**" Islas Malvinas said, sounding confused, and Argentina couldn't help but see the young, innocent girl that she had been.

"Malvinas," Argentina began, his voice soft, "**I am your father. I don't know what lies Britain has fed you, but I promise, you don't need to believe them anymore. I will not allow anyone to hurt you ever again, not Britain, not anyone. You are my child, and your safety and happiness are my top priority.**"

"**And what if I was happier with Fa—with Britain?**" Islas Malvinas asked, giving Argentina a strange look. Argentina swallowed.

It was terrifying that someone could ever think of themselves as happy when having to live with someone who hurt them. It was terrifying that Britain could get someone to think this way.

"**He abused you. You weren't happy with him, even if you think you were,**" Argentina said, watching as Islas Malvinas moved to look at her feet, as if she didn't want to confront that statement.

How long would it take her to heal from the damage that Britain had done to her?

"**I know you have probably been told not to trust me, to hate me, but once this ceremony is over, we can go home, and I will show you my human face, tell you my human name,**" Argentina said, watching as Islas Malvinas' head shot up at that.

"**You would tell me that?**" Islas Malvinas asked, sounding both confused and surprised.

"**You're my daughter. I trust you with the most vulnerable parts of myself, and I hope one day you can trust me with the same,**" Argentina said. Islas Malvinas looked away again, but didn't say anything else.

Argentina gave a small, nervous smile.

Things were not perfect now, but his daughter was home, and that meant things could only get better.

La Familia de España

Prompt: Familia

Spain wasn't sure who was in control of the body, but he couldn't find himself caring all that much, as he leaned his head against his twin's side with a sigh of contentment.

He loved being in their little world, having a proper body, having his family surrounding him, and feeling safe and loved in a way he didn't often feel nowadays.

"Are you about to fall asleep?" Elena asked, brushing her finger over Spain's forehead. He opened his eyes, seeing Abuelo and Elena looking down at him with small smiles.

"You try dealing with fighting in the EU and tell me if you want to be in charge of that," Spain grumbled. Abuelo laughed.

"I am glad I did not have to deal with things like that when I was a country. Diplomacy is so much harder than war. It was simple, clean, and—"

"And the reason why you kept getting attacked by people, Abuelo. Diplomacy is the way of the future. War has caused enough pain," Elena said. Abuelo gave her a sad smile.

"I know. I have seen enough of it, with the civil war, and the world wars, and all you have been through in the past couple of years. I am glad you are going to live to see proper peace," Abuelo said, strumming his guitar.

"I'm just glad you didn't die. I don't know what I would have done without you," Spain said, as sadness seemed to darken Elena's eyes, as she moved to run her hair through Spain's head.

"We're all very lucky about that," she said, and Abuelo laughed.

"Indeed. I am glad that God has blessed me with a few more years on this earth to be here to help and guide you. Speaking of guiding you, España, when are you going to get yourself a girlfriend?" Abuelo asked, and Spain buried his face in his hands, as Elena, his uncaring and heartless sister, laughed over his head.

Spain's face was burning red.

"Abuelo, I'm not ready for that yet," Spain said, not wanting to go over the many reasons why, which started and ended with his gender and the gender of his body.

"Why not? You are a handsome young man, filled with all the wonderful genes from my side of the family. All the beautiful mujeres loved me just as they will love you," Abuelo said, as Spain peeked his eyes out from behind his hands just in time to see Elena roll her eyes.

"Abuelo, we don't need to know about your escapades during your youth. Besides, Spain has other things to worry about, like parenting and geopolitical politics," Elena said. Spain laughed.

"Yes, Abuelo, I am very busy," Spain said. Abuelo smiled.

"Just remember to take time for yourself, sí? I want you to be happy," Abuelo said. Spain's face split into a small smile.

"Trust me, Abuelo. I am."

La Muerte de Abuelo

Spanish Empire had lived a long life.

He had seen warfare change. He had seen the beginning of the age of empires and had led it himself. He had seen the birth and death of so many nations that it felt so...strange to be the next one to pass.

He knew he was going to see so many of his family members again, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who had passed on long before he had.

Spanish Empire was not particularly afraid of death for that reason. He knew he was not going to be alone. He had family waiting for him, family that he had not seen for a long time.

He was glad that he would get to see them all again. He was glad that he would hear their voices, see their faces, and get to know them once again.

It had been many years since that day in 1833, and he still missed them all terribly.

Spanish Empire had but one regret. That he was leaving his precious granddaughter behind.

Spain was good, and she tried hard to live up to the never-ending expectations that Franco had for her, twisting herself into whatever he wanted, and ignoring any pain that it caused her.

Spanish Empire did not want to leave her behind.

But...Franco was dead, and Spanish Empire had lived to see it. It seemed as if Juan Carlos might actually care more about Spain in the ways that truly matter, and Spanish Empire trusted that his granddaughter was going to be in good hands.

She was going to have a bright future now that the clouds were

clearing.

Spanish Empire might not be able to watch from the land of the living anymore, but he would certainly watch from up above.

Spanish Empire finished off his last goodbye letter to the last of his descendants in the Americas.

Did he expect them to read it? No, but it didn't feel right without making sure everyone got a goodbye.

Philippines, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Argentina, Peru, Mexico—they were all related to him, in one way or another, and he did want them to know that although they ignored the bonds of family, they were still strong enough for him to care.

He might not know very many of them personally, especially the states, but they were strong people, and he knew they were all going to find their way, find a good future somehow.

"Abuelo?" Spanish Empire heard a nervous voice say from behind him, and he turned to see his beautiful granddaughter, tears in her eyes. He quickly crossed the room and pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead.

"How are you, dear?" He asked, wiping away some of the tears.

He knew who they were for.

"I...are you sure there's nothing that can be done?" Spain asked. Spanish Empire shook his head.

"You and I both know my song has come to an end. And that's okay, because it was beautiful, and I got to experience it with so many people like you. I will be watching over you, and I will make sure our family up there knows how their homeland is going to be in the best of hands," Spanish Empire said. Spain sniffled, and a few more tears fell.

"I don't know how to go on alone," Spain said. Spanish Empire smiled.

"I'm sorry I can't help you more with that. But I promise, my dear, you are going to do amazing. You have such a bright future ahead of you, I know it. You will be fine. There is no one else I'd rather have inherit this wonderful land," Spanish Empire said, before pulling his granddaughter into a hug.

Knowing his death was coming was terrifying, but it gave him the opportunity to do the most important thing of all—say goodbye.